alliance quebec

Quebec NOTES

WEEKLY COMMENT & ANALYSIS ON THE COMING QUEBEC ELECTION

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THE ELECTION - IT'S A GO!

Alliance Quebec took a forthright stand in the election campaign on the day the vote was called.

At a Montreal news conference last Sunday, President Michael Hamelin lost no time affirming that AQ would be in the campaign, advocating the issues that concern the English-speaking community.

And he said that Alliance Quebec concerns would include the presentation of the separation question by the Parti Québéçois.

"Alliance Quebec is not making this an election about "sovereignty" for Quebec," Hamelin told news reporters.

"The PQ has done that, it's in their policy.

They can not walk away from the scenario they have painted.

"So sovereignty becomes the #1 issue and nothing else is important."

Hamelin insisted that every vote counts in this election and expressed the belief that Quebecers do not support the PQ's separation platform.

Using the example of Quebec's English-speaking youth and a recent study showing their intention to leave, Mr. Hamelin said "these are Quebec-raised and Quebec-trained resources. Quebec is losing them.

STANDINGS AT DISSOLUTION

	Seats
TOTAL:	125
Liberals	78
PQ	34
Equality	0
Action Démocratique	0
Independent	5
Vacant:	8
NEEDED TO WIN	63
SEATS WHERE English-speaking community exceeds 10% of Voters	51

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The Globe and Mail

. . . This time, unlike in 1976 and 1981, they will begin the process of separation on taking office, to be ratified by a referendum. If we take them at their work, there is now no middle ground, no safety net, no ambiguity. . . .This election offers Quebeckers [sic] a choice. While they cannot be asked to reject the PQ forever because of its commitment to independence, they must appreciate the instability its election would create. They must think seriously about Mr. Johnson, his colleagues and his ideas, which do represent a break with the past, if not a repudiation of it. There are times for ambiguity; this is not one of them.

Le Devoir (G. Lesage)

. . .If Mr. Johnson is a Canadian first and foremost, Mr. Parizeau relishes being a sovereignist before, during and after the elections. Without saying so publicly, it is as if both , having submitted to the hesitations and misgivings of their predecessors, wish now to demonstrate at every opportunity their intransigence, even inflexibility, of belief. . . . But are Quebecers themselves prepared for this hard-edged double-or-nothing contest, from which there is no appeal? They're unhappy, yes;

. . . SEE OVER EDITORIALS

Quotes Of The Week

The people of Quebec will have to choose their destiny. Quebecers will choose between two political options: separation and political union. For the first time, the opposition is requesting and asking for a mandate to initiate steps immediately upon its election to get nearer and to achieve sovereignty and separation. The government's platform is the strengthening of the economic union of Canada."

Daniel Johnson, calling the election Sunday July 24, 1994.

"The Parti Québécois is sovereignist before, during and after the election. Nothing has changed. The objective does not change under the pretext that we are heading into an election. . . .I thought a great deal about 1980. I think the whole trouble with us at that time was that we gave so many powerful handles to English Canada and to English Canadians on the issue of sovereignty. The strategy at this time is very much influenced by that analysis of what happened in 1980. There will not be any handles."

Jacques Parizeau, July 24 1994, in Quebec City news conference.

VOTE.... (Con't from Page 1)

I believe this is a microcosm of the greater Quebec society. Our continued unity debates and linguistic tensions are subverting our progress. We must get beyond them."

Media Days

July 21 - Despite rumours otherwise the election is not called today.
- A university in Massachusetts is reported dumping its Hydro bonds.
- The PQ says it will re-do the Mercier nomination
- Sam Elkas says he will not run for the Liberals in the coming election to make way for "younger" candidates.

July 22 - No newspaper carried election speculation - or even stories - on its front page.
- **Le Devoir** and **The Globe and Mail** present the findings of their joint poll. Both read it as saying few are interested in sovereignty. **Le Devoir** reports that "a majority" - 45.7% - say they want the PQ to start separating. (A majority?)

July 23 - PQ policy changes. At the weekend General Council Meeting, now Bill86 changes will be left alone for "at-least a year."

July 24 - Johnson calls for Septermber 12th, vote.

July 25 - Campaign Day 1
- **La Presse** A leaked report from the brokerage firm Midland Walwyn speculates that Quebec bonds could pay outstanding interest rates with separation, much higher than those Canada bonds offered -- and there'd be little risk of default.
- **La Presse** also says the Liberal election strategy would focus on job creation and reducing the role of the state while abandoning the constitutional wars. The PQ platform highlights jobs (with economic plans that can only be filled outside Confederation); a Quebec constitution ("with special provisions for minority aboriginals and anglophones") and social programs (no change to free universial medicare, new housing and wider benefits for welfare recipients). He also expressed the Alliance's intension to play a very key roles in the election campaign. "We will be everywhere -- in every part of Quebec -- and getting involved in every area and issue. In some, such as the economy, we will be encouraging debate. In other areas, such as the role of English-speaking Quebecers in this province, we will be leading debate."

BLOC ROLLS OUT

Bloc Québécois leader Lucien Bouchard will start his own public campaign tour to aid the Parti Québéçois vote-getting effort. But the federal Opposition leader will allow all the tour strategy to be decided by the PQ.

Gilles Duceppe, acting leader while Bouchard is on vacation, denies that Bouchard's presence is essential to a PQ win."Absolutely not," says Duceppe, "there are actually two sovereignists leaders who are very popular in Quebec, who serve the same cause, who are not shy about going around together, which is more than can be said about those in the other camps."

HOT AIR WARNING

Natural Resources and Native Affairs Minister Christos Sirros calls the Parti Québécois lead in the recent public opinion polls "is just a balloon" that will deflate over the course of the next six weeks.

Sirros told reporters in Quebec City that the build up of a lead of as much as 10 points for the PQ in opinion polls "are based on hypothetical situations. Now that the campaign has started, and a discussion of the real issues and concerns. Voters won't vote simply beause they want a change."

EDITORIALS (Cont'd from page 1)

dissatisfied, yes; but would they not rather change just the government, without initiating a change in their country? The PQ slogan "another way to govern" is marvellous, but what does it actually mean? .... Tolerance and mutual respect must be shown [throughout]. On September 13th, we'll all have to continue living together.

The Gazette - So, the campaign ought to be simple and clearcut, paving the way for a clear choice by the voters. Unfortunately, that is almost certainly not the way it will work out. For starters, there is the sad perennial truth that many Quebec voters do not understand that sovereignty, the word the PQ insists on using, means independence. Many do not understand the difference between the referendum promised in 1976 and the one promised now. Polls that show the PQ well placed to win this election also continue to show, as always, a solid majority of Quebecers opposed to independence. . . .Summer or no summer, the campaign and countdown have started. It's time to pay attention.